

Liquor Law Review

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Inbox

I'm a 27 year old young professional that moved to Melbourne 2 years ago to pursue an opportunity to do my Masters degree. I had every intention of moving back to Sydney after the completion of my degree.

However, so long as the lockout laws are in place, and they continue to decimate a once thriving nightlife culture, nullify the business models of honest entrepreneurs, and erode the civil liberties of the innocent, I will not consider returning.

I loved living in Sydney and socialising until early hours on the weekend. I never got into a fight. Violence was virtually non-existent in the venues I frequented. In fact the opposite was true. They were places of community and companionship. Those venues have all closed down as a direct result of the lock out laws.

Many of my friends have lost their jobs. Some took a punt on opening small bars or restaurants and have now have had to close up shop and are now left with significant financial hardship. Their only wrong doing was opening a business in an ill-fated postcode.

Every time I visit Sydney I am saddened. The place feels like a shell of its once great self. Cities are living and breathing human systems. They need the potential to be loud, bold, creative and fun because humans have the potential to be loud, bold, creative and fun. Sydney no longer has any of these attributes. Domestic airlines have started marketing weekend flights to Melbourne to the under 30 segment. That says it all really.

So long as the lock out laws are in place, I will not be returning to Sydney. I am not alone. Many of my friends have moved to Melbourne or overseas. Even more are seriously considering it. The city is losing its most ambitious and brightest minds because of a well intentioned but horribly conceived policy.

Violence is a serious issue that needs to be addressed but you only have to look at the Melbourne model (see: <https://www.broadsheet.com.au/melbourne/city-file/article/what-will-it-take-turn-melbourne-24-hour-city>), or the London model, or the Amsterdam model, or the Copenhagen model (I could keep going) to understand that Sydney's approach misses the mark. A late night economy and culture can be a safe one. It requires holistic, nuanced, human-centred urban policy that is inclusive of more than just the opinions of the police and surgeons.

Don't even get me started on the blatant corruption and vested interests of the casinos.

Do the right thing.

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Joe Laney

